

# \*Ye Olde Plum News\*

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## BOOKIE BUSINESS

### RUPERT STEGGLES

Steggles arranged betting and manipulated the outcome. He kept the book for sporting events at Twing, like the Choir Boys' Handicap and the Mothers' Bag Race. *He was a little, rat-faced fellow, with shifty eyes and a suspicious nature.* Bertie Wooster had put his money on the page boy Harold for the Choir Boys' race, at good odds, when Steggles discovered the real capacity of this boy. He put a beetle inside Harold's collar during the Sunday Service and Harold's screaming got him expelled from the choir, and thus disqualified for the race. *"A bally swindler"* said Bertie. Bingo Little said: *"Bertie, that hound Steggles is nothing more nor less than one of our leading snakes."* Steggles also kept the book for, and manipulated, an eating contest between two boys and the betting on a marriage between Mary Burgess and Bingo Little.

(The Inimitable Jeeves, 1923)

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### JOE THE LAWYER

A bloke at a pub told Ukridge: *"He's wide, Joe is. He had a dog that was entered for the Waterloo Cup, and it died."* "I know." "Well, I bet you don't know what he did. Some of the lads were in here just now, talking about it. He raffled that dog." "How do you mean, raffled it?" "Put it up for a raffle at twenty pounds a ticket." "But it was dead." "Certainly it was dead. But he didn't tell them that. That's where he was wide." "But how could he raffle a dead dog?" "Why couldn't he raffle a dead dog? Nobody knew it was dead." "How about the man who drew the winning ticket?" "Ah! Well, he had to tell him, of course. He just handed him his money back. And there he was, a couple of hundred quid in hand." Joe was on his way to run bookie business at the Sandown races, but was stopped to go there by a dog. A substantial income was jeopardized. Ukridge wasn't afraid of the dog and helped him out for a couple of hundred quid.

(The Level Business Head, 1945)

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### "HONEST PATCH" PERKINS

Captain Biggar said: *"A blighter of a bookie. A cad of the lowest order with a soul as black as his finger-nails. I've been after him for hours."* ...

*"The low hound did the dirty on me. Seemed straight enough, too. Chap with a walrus moustache and a patch over his left eye, Honest Patch Perkins he called himself."* Captain Biggar put a fiver on a double. *There was the colossal sum of three thousand pounds two shillings and sixpence owing to me, plus my original fiver which I had handed to the fellow's clerk, a chap in a check suit and another walrus moustache. And what happened? This inky-hearted bookie welshed on me. He legged it in his car with me after him."*

"Honest Patch" Perkins' real identity was Bill, ninth earl of Rowcester, and a member of the Drones club, who desperately needed some money and use this method, assisted by Jeeves. His intention, as a gentleman, was to fulfil his obligations – but later, Jeeves, also in disguise, acted as his clerk.

(Ring for Jeeves, 1953)

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### CLAUDE "MUSTARD" POTT

Claude Pott visited the Drones club and quickly grasped the opportunity to arrange a Clothes Stakes. *"Pott is my name, gentlemen – a name at one time, I venture to assert, not unfamiliar to patrons of the sport of kings, and though I have retired from active business as a turf commission agent I am still willing to make a little book from time to time to entertain sportsmen and gentlemen... There is at the moment a gentleman in the telephone booth along the corridor, and I have just taken the precaution to instruct a page-boy to shove a wedge under the door, thus ensuring that he will remain there and so accord you all ample leisure in which to place your wagers... Now then, gentlemen, the simple question you have to ask yourselves is – what is the gentleman in the telephone booth wearing? The locked-in gentleman was Horace Pendlebury-Davenport. He arrived at the Drones at the same time as Mustard, directly from a costume ball, dressed as a Zulu. Noone else but Mustard saw him. Mustard quickly saw the business opportunity and locked him in into a telephone booth. This was the kind of stake he liked. Lord Ickenham later told Bingo that he had learnt never to wager against Mustard."*

(Uncle Fred in the Springtime, 1939)

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### UKRIDGE

Ukridge told Corky about his new business: *"I have turned the corner, old man. Last Saturday we cleaned up to an extraordinary extent at Sandown."* "We?" "The firm. I told you I had become a sleeping-partner in a bookie's business. Isaac O'Brien is the name of the firm." Like most of Ukridge's business ideas it failed. His friend Looney Coote told: *I won seven hundred and fifty quid. Just like that! I put it with that new fellow you were telling me about at the O. W. dinner, old man – that chap Isaac O'Brien. It sent him absolutely broke and he's had to go out of business. He's only paid me six hundred quid so far, but he says he has some sort of sleeping partner or something who may be able to raise the balance."*

(The Long Arm of Looney Coote, 1922)

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### IN NICE BUT NOT NICE

Bingo was in Nice, without money, and owed the bookie a tenner. The bookie accepted to wait for the money. *"Suppose we say till next Friday?... You think you may not be able to settle?... I do hope you will,"* he said, "and I'll tell you why. It's silly to be superstitious, I know, but I can't help remembering that every single bloke that's ever done me down for money has had a nasty accident occur to him. Time after time I've seen it happen... It almost seems like some kind of fate. Only the other day there was a fellow with a ginger moustache named Watherspoon. Owed me fifty for Plumpton and pleaded the Gaming Act. And would you believe it, less than a week later he was found unconscious in the street – must have got into some unpleasantness of some kind – and had to have six stitches." "Six!" "Seven. I was forgetting the one over his left eye. Makes you think, that sort of thing does. Hoy Erbut," he called. *A frightful plug-ugly appeared from nowhere, as if he had been a Djinn and the bookie had rubbed a lamp. "Erbut,"* said the bookie, *"I want you to meet Mr. Little, Erbut. Take a good look at him. You'll remember him again?"*

(All's well with Bingo, 1937)

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